

Blackwater

National Wildlife Refuge

Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex Fact Sheet

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D)
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D)
Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-1st)

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Managed as part of the Chesapeake
Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge
Complex.

Purpose

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge was established to protect and manage habitat for migratory birds, threatened and endangered plants and animals and other native species.

Public Use Notes

- Visitor center
- Interpretive trails
- Hunting (deer)
- Fishing (April 1 to September 30)
- Boating (April 1 to September 30)

Management Activities

- Protecting land through acquisition and easements
- Enhancing forest conditions for endangered Delmarva fox squirrels and forest interior dwelling birds
- Controlling invasive exotic species to protect native species
- Administering prescribed burns on 13,000 acres to improve refuge marsh and woodland habitats
- Managing 650 acres of croplands to diversify wildlife habitat
- Managing 27 freshwater impoundments covering 850 acres to provide feeding and resting areas for migrating birds
- Administering trapping programs to manage furbearer populations
- Conducting scientific research to improve management decisions

Highlights

The refuge is recognized as an internationally important birding area, attracting wetland birds such as geese, ducks, herons, egrets and osprey.

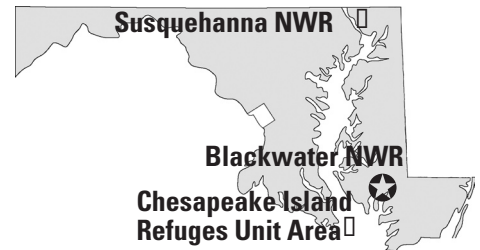
More than 200 bald eagles winter on the refuge, which supports the largest nesting population on the Atlantic coast north of Florida.

The refuge has the largest protected population of endangered Delmarva fox squirrels in the species' range.

More than 500,000 people visit the refuge each year, adding \$15 million to the local economy.

The refuge and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation cooperatively manage the Karen Noon Environmental Center.

The refuge is a designated Gateway to the Chesapeake and a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site).



Issues

Thousands of acres of marshland have been lost since the 1940s due to saltwater intrusion and herbivores.

The spread of nutria, gypsy moth, mute swan, phragmites and other invasive species threaten native and endangered species.

Wildfires impact nearby residents and sensitive refuge resources.

Increasing numbers of resident Canada geese are damaging the fragile wetlands.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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